

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4020

ANSWERED ON:30.04.2012

CONSERVATION OF WETLANDS

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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the wetlands and water bodies have been considerably reduced due to various reasons including illegal construction activities in the country;
- (b) if so, the number of cases have been noticed during the last three years and the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the steps being taken by the Government to protect the available wetlands and water bodies in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN)

(a) & (b). Yes Sir, many wetlands and water bodies in the country are shrinking in size due to encroachment, anthropogenic pressures, uncontrolled siltation, weed infestation, discharge of sewage and industrial effluents, surface run-off, chemical pesticides and fertilizers including illegal construction activities, etc. Though number of such cases have been noticed during the last three years which are causative for shrinkage of wetlands. There are no corroborative evidences of estimated loss of wetlands due to these reasons.

(c) Considering the importance of wetlands, the Ministry of Environment and Forests has identified 115 wetlands in the country, covering 24 States and two Union Territories for conservation and management under the National Wetland Conservation Programme (NWCP). 100% assistance under this programme is given for activities like survey & demarcation, catchment area treatment, desilting & dredging, bio-fencing, fisheries development, weed control, biodiversity conservation, pollution abatement, education & awareness and community participation, etc. These activities are adequately supported by research projects in priority areas of wetland management to supplement execution of management action plans in field.

In order not to use wetlands beyond their carrying capacity, the Government has very recently notified Wetlands

(Conservation and Management) Rules 2010. All the state governments have been advised to notify wetlands so that they are regulated as per the notification. So far, an amount of Rs 113.90 crores has been released to the concerned state governments for undertaking various conservation activities.